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U. S. Department of Agriculture
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Housekeeper's Chat

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Candied Peel and Other Christmas Confections". Approved by the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S. D. A. Also menu.

Bulletin available: Radio cookbook.

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Christmas wasn't Christmas in my youth, unless a whole day during the preceding week was devoted to making the Christmas candies. The only time I remember this ceremony being dispensed with was when Aggie came down with the mumps, and Ted had to stay with friends because he'd never had them- or it, - whichever one should say in speaking of mumps.

Nowadays, however, I have so few whole days at my disposal, that I like to begin on my Christmas candy-making considerably earlier than I used to, and spread it out a little more.

The candies are made for several purposes: To use ourselves, on the tree, in the stockings, and to pass around when friends drop in during the holidays. But chiefly, to use for gifts, attractively wrapped in gay painted boxes or jars, and tied with Christmas ribbons and red paper and a sprig of holly or mistletoe on top.

The first Christmas confection I make is candied peel. Mostly grapefruit peel, but some orange and lemon, depending on the kind and quality of peel I have on hand. I pack some of the peel as it is, and some I dip in chocolate.

Then I make some- or all- of the various candies mentioned in the green cookbook. On the very first page of this section,- that is, on page 76,- you will find directions for making Fondant. So many things can be done with Fondant. You can use it to stuff dates or prunes. It may also be melted, flavored with oil or peppermint, oil of wintergreen, oil of roses, vanilla, or almond extract, and dropped from a teaspoon onto waxed paper, to make wafers. After these candies become hardened, they may be dipped in chocolate.

On the next page of the cookbook, there are three candy recipes-- for Chocolate Fudge, Nut-Coated Marshmallows, and the good old-fashioned candy known as Pralines.

On page 78 there are four more recipes--one for Nut Brittle, one for Parisian Sweets, one for Popcorn Balls, and one for Sugared Popcorn.

Too many recipes to broadcast, but if you'll hurry, and send in your order right away today, you'll get the cookbook in time for Christmas candy-making.

I might give you a few "helpful hints" about candy making. For one thing, be sure you have a pan of suitable size. A pan with a smooth surface is best, of material thick enough to prevent scorching. Heavy aluminum is good. The pan should not be too large, but large enough to allow space for "boiling up." A wooden spoon is desirable. Wooden spoons do not scratch the saucepan, and are easy to handle, in hot candy. Many people use a marble slab for candy work. A baking sheet, or a larger platter, is quite satisfactory.

If you are making brown sugar candy, remember that light brown sugar has a more delicate flavor than dark brown sugar. Remember also that the flavor of butter is more pleasing than that of other fat, in delicately flavored candies. Butter is most satisfactory for greasing candy pans, too, as the fat used is sure to taste in the candy.

Do you know how to cover candy and nuts with chocolate? Get the commercial chocolate prepared for dipping. Cut some of the chocolate into small pieces and put in a shallow dish over hot water to melt slightly. Stir with the fingers until the whole mass has melted. Dip the pieces of candy or nuts into the melted chocolate until well coated and place on waxed paper to dry, which will require only a short time when this method of coating is used.

I spoke of chocolate-dipped candied grapefruit peel a few minutes ago. It is coated in the same way as other confections. But, someone asks, how do you make the candied peel in the first place?

This recipe is not in the Radio Cookbook, so I'd better give it to you. If you intend to dip the peel, prepare it several hours beforehand, so that it will dry off somewhat.

Four ingredients for candied peel, besides chocolate for dipping:

10 ounces grapefruit peel.
2 cups (14 ounces) sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt

1-1/3 cups water for sirup,
or enough to cover

Thick, soft, unblemished peel from smooth grapefruit should be selected. Strip the peel from the fruit in quarter sections including all the white part possible. Cut into strips 1/2 inch wide. Do not trim off either the outer rind or white pith. Use the entire peel.

Parboil the peel three times. Add 2 quarts of cold water each time,

bring to the boil, cook for 1/2 hour, and discard the water after each cooking.

The strips should then be tender and must be handled gently to prevent breaking. Place the water, salt, and sugar in a saucepan about 8 inches in diameter and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Then add the strips of peel, arranging them carefully, skin side up, so that they lie parallel to each other to prevent their being broken when turned.

Cook rapidly for about 40 minutes, then reduce the heat and continue to boil for about 30 to 40 minutes longer, or until all the sirup is absorbed. You have to watch with care at this point to see that the sirup does not scorch. Lift or turn the strips of peel frequently with a fork, so that all are equally penetrated by the sirup. Place the strips skin side down on waxed paper, and when cool, cut in pieces from 1-1/2 to 2 inches long for dipping.

If you do not intend to dip the peel in chocolate, leave it in long strips and roll in granulated sugar until there is a coating formed, but not a heavy crust. Dry out for a few hours, then wrap in waxed paper and store in tightly covered tin or glass containers. If you leave the peel in paper boxes it tends to become hard and crusty in winter and sticky in summer. If properly stored in a moderately cool place it should keep in good condition for 2 or 3 weeks.

My dinner menu today would be good for either Saturday night or Sunday. I'll read it now: Cold Roast Pork; Creamed Oyster Plant, sometimes called Salsify; String Beans, Apple Sauce and Doughnuts.

I'll give you the recipe for Creamed Oyster Plant. Six items to check:

2 bunches salsify, or oyster plant	1 cup milk
2 tablespoons melted butter	1/2 teaspoon salt
or other fat	Pepper
2 tablespoons flour	1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Wash the salsify, scrape, cut into small pieces, and drop into cold water to prevent it from turning dark. Boil in an uncovered pan in a small quantity of unsalted water for 30 minutes, or until tender, and drain. Prepare a sauce of the fat, flour, milk, salt, and pepper, pour this over the cooked salsify, reheat, and serve with the chopped parsley sprinkled over the top.

Better repeat the menu: Cold Roast Pork; Creamed Oyster Plant; String Beans; Apple Sauce and Doughnuts.

I haven't quite decided on my program for next Monday. There'll be a menu, of course, and a recipe or so- and I'll try to surprise you with something unusual in the rest of the program.

